LAST CHAPTER SUMMARY: ASAHI'S SUPER SECRET PLAN TO GIVE SHIRAGAMI-SAN A PRESENT!!

TL NOTE: "OUT WITH THE DEMON, IN WITH THE FORTUNE" IS A TRADITIONAL CHANT DURING "SETSUBUN", THE CELEBRATION MARKING THE END OF WINTER.

...SERI-OUSLY THOUGH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
CAN'T YOU AT LEAST TRY FIGHTING BACK?
...WELL, WHAT CAN I DO?
AFTER ALL, I'M A VAMPIRE.
...GEEZ, YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THAT.

YOUKO!!
HAPPY BIRTH-DAY!!
...ONE, TWO...
COME ON, WASH YOUR HANDS, YOUKO, SHIHO.
THEN WHY DID YOU SEND ME SUCH A BIG INVITATION?
IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY? WHY, I HAD TOTES FOR-GOTTEN!!
WHAT? WHAT?
WHENEVER WINTER COMES AROUND IT REMINDS ME—
I COULD NEVER SEND THE INVI-TATIONS I HAD PRE-PARED TO MY CLASSMATES. BUT...
COME ON DEAR, DON'T LAZE AROUND AND TURN THE LIGHTS OFF!!
14 YEARS ALREADY... TIME SURE FLIES. DOESN'T IT...!!

I WAS SO HAPPY, I COULDN'T EVEN SAY ANYTHING.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU~ ♪
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR YOUKO...
MOM, DAD, SHIHO, AND SHIROU ALWAYS WENT ALL OUT CELEBRATING WITH ME.
WHENEVER I REMEMBER IT I FEEL LIKE CRYING.
YOUKO, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO DO?
UM... LET'S SEE...
THE GAME OF LIFE!!
HUHU... DON'T EXPECT ME TO HOLD BACK, YOUKO...!!
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVE MUCH TO HOLD BACK, BOSS...
THAT'S WHAT MY BIRTHDAYS WERE LIKE.
CHAPTER 168: "LET'S CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY!!う!!」

HM, WHAT'S THIS?
DECEMBER HAS COME, HASN'T IT...
そわ
そわそわ
WHAT HAPPENS ON DECEMBER 1ST AGAIN?
DUNNO... I FEEL LIKE EATIN' CAKE FOR SOME REASON!!
チラッ
誕生日特集
これもうアピールいらんやろ誕生日申告だよな…!?
YOU'RE NOT SO MUCH REMINDING US, AS FLAUNTING IT IN OUR FACES AT THIS POINT...!!

AH, WELL
I DID AVOID MENTIONING IT UNTIL NOW...
HM?
IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT DECEMBER 1ST?
ANYWAY, LET'S GO HOME, YOUKO.
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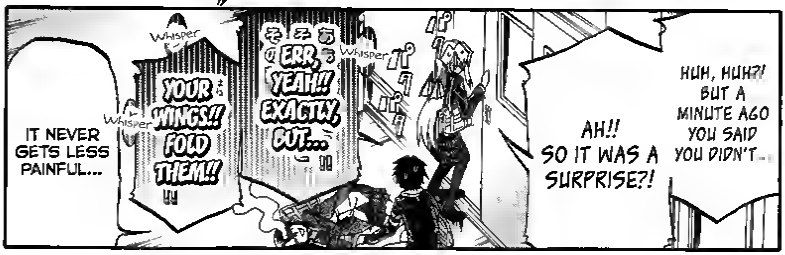
Is this alright ?!
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper

Should be around here
SHIRA-GAMI-SAN!!
HAPPY BIRTH-DAAAY...

HUH...
WHA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAT?!
SHIHO-SAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAAA-AAN!!
...IS THAT WHAT YOU MEANT BY "SOMEHOW"?!


HUH, HUH?! BUT A MINUTE AGO YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T...
AH!! SO IT WAS A SURPRISE?!
ERR, YEAH!! EXACTLY, BUT...
YOUR WINGS!! FOLD THEM!!
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper
IT NEVER GETS LESS PAINFUL...

HEH. IT'S BECAUSE ASAHI FORCED ME TO... OKAY?
CONGRATS, YOUKO!!
COME NOW, AKEMI-SAN.
YOU HAD BOUGHT HER A PRESENT EVEN BEFORE HE ASKED YOU.
OH MY, YOUKO-CHAN IS ALREADY 18...!!
SHIRAGAMI-SAN, IT WAS ME!! I DECORATED THIS ROOM!!
YOU DIDN'T DO IT ALONE, SHIMAKOU.

HUH?
AH... ERR...
THANK... YOU...?
HEY, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, COME IN!!
ERR... YEAH!!
HM? HER REACTION WASN'T AS STRONG AS I IMAGINED
I THOUGHT GATHERING EVERYONE FOR A PARTY WOULD BE BEST, BUT...
IT'S ALRIGHT, KUROMINE-KUN.

SHE'S JUST SLIGHTLY CONFUSED.
SHE'S NEVER HAD HER CLASS-MATES
WISH HER A HAPPY BIRTHDAY WITH NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
HAPPY BIRTH-DAY
パパパパパパ
CONGRATS, SHIRAGAMI-SAN!!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR YOUKO...
HAPPY BIRTH-DAY TO YOU ♪
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ♪
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ♪

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HERE, A PLATE FOR YOU, SHIRAGAMI-SAN!!
AH.
THANK YOU, AKEMI-SAN!!
AH!
UM... YOUKO-SAN, I...
WAIT A MINUTE, KUROMINE-KUN!!
Whisper
I... I DIDN'T REALLY BUY ANY-THING FANCY THOUGH...
UH? YOU THINK SO?
YEAH, YOU'RE HER BOYFRIEND, SO YOU GO LAST!!
THAT'S NO GOOD! YOU CAN'T GIVE YOUR PRESENT FIRST!
INABA-SAN, SASAKI-SAN, MATSU-MOTO-SAN...
SHIRA-GAMI-SAN!! THIS IS FROM THE THREE OF US!!
HUH?
C'MON, YA SHOULDN'T HAVE!!
YEAH... I HAVE TO BE CON-FIDENT!! MINE WILL BE THE BEST...
HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE!! YOUR HEART CHOSE IT, RIGHT?
THE PRESENT GIVEN BY HER BOYFRIEND IS THE ONE SHE'LL LIKE THE MOST, TRUST ME!!
OUR JOB WILL BE TO GET HER EXCITED FOR IT!!

待ま
WAIT, DON'T RAISE THE BAR SO HIGH RIGHT OFF THE BAT!!
な!?
YEAH, WHEN YOU WERE READING THAT FASHION MAG IN CLASS,
YOU WERE CONSTANTLY LOOKING AT THAT ONE.
OH? SASAKI-SAN, INABA-SAN, MATSUMOTO-SAN...
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED THIS BAG!!
IT'S ALRIGHT!! AS I SAID, HER BOYFRIEND'S PRESENT WILL MAKE HER HAPPIEST!!
WAIT... WASN'T THAT KINDA EXPENSIVE...?
CONGRATS, SHIRAGAMI-SAN.
HAHA, OF COURSE IT IS!
HUH?! ARE YA SURE IT'S OKAY?! I MEAN...
ERR... WELL, I GUESS IT'S OKAY... RIGHT?!
IT'S NOT LIKE EVERYONE'S GONNA GIVE HER SUCH...
また佐々木さん心の闇開いちゃってるし!!
...I, TOO, LIKED MY BOYFRIEND'S PRESENTS THE MOST BEFORE WE...
AH, SO-SORRY.
AND NOW SASAKI-SAN'S WOUNDS OPENED AGAIN!!

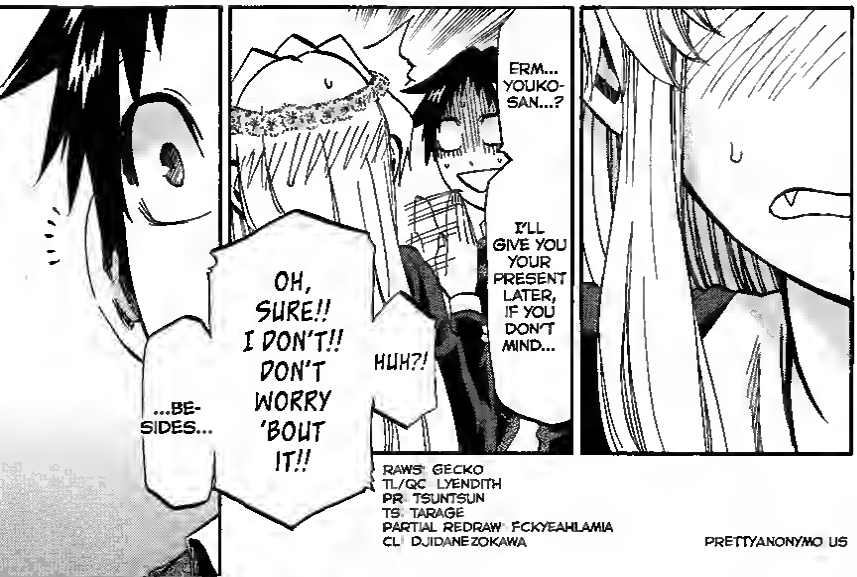
FOR ONCE, YOU REALLY LOOK LIKE A DEMOOOOOOON!!
YOUR HEARTFELT "THANK YOU"...!!
FUFU... COME ON, GIVE IT TO ME...
OOOH?! KAREN-CHAN?!
COULD THESE BE COUPLE'S AMUSEMENT PARK TICKETS?!
BESIDES, ISN'T YOUR BUDGET A BIT TIGHT, PREZ?! YOU WORK FOR FREE!!
WHAT... WHY DO ALL THESE AWESOME PRESENTS KEEP POPPING UP...?
FUFU... GOOD, THE PRICE HAS BEEN PAID.
YA SURE?! KAREN-CHAN THANK YA!!
...YOUKO.
...SHIRAGAMI-SAN.
THAT SHOULD BREAK THE MOMENTUM... I THINK!!
OH... BUT WAIT, MIKAN AND SHIHO ARE OFFERING RUSSIAN CHOUS AND A NET... WITH FISH?

THEY COPPED OOOOUUUT?!
OOOOUUUT!?
SOME-THING GREAT?!
AH, BUT THAT'S TOO MUCH!! I'MA FEEL GUILTY!!
BUT I PREPARED SOMETHING GREAT FOR YOU, LOOK FOR-WARD TO IT!!
SORRY, I DON'T HAVE MY PRESENT WITH ME RIGHT NOW.

HOW ABOUT YOU NOTICE THAT EARLIER?!
A...Did I really plan to give her a net for her birthday...?
Whisper
Thanks! Wait!
For you!
HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO GIVE HER THAT AFTER THOSE LAVISH PRESENTS?!
WHAT?! YOU BOUGHT PRESENTS, DIDN'T YOU?! SO WHY?!

I'M BORROWING A CHOU, AKEMI-SAN.
NO, IT'S NOT A PARTY WITHOUT A KING GA-
FORCE-FULLY CHANGING THE SUBJECT, AREN'T YOU...!!
IT'S NOT A PARTY WITHOUT SOME RUSSIAN CHOUS!!
OH! GLAD-LY!!
LET'S GET REAL WITH THE GAME OF LIFE!!
OKAY, YOUKO!!

UWAH, THIS GAME TAKES ME BACK.
WE USED TO PLAY IT ON NEW YEAR'S EVE IN MY FAMILY.
SHIRA-GAMI-SAN, WHAT COLOR WILL YOU TAKE?
OKAY, THE LOSER GETS A CHOU AS A REWARD.
AH, THEN... WHITE...
HUH? I ALREADY GOT A CHOU WITHOUT LOSING.
YOU'RE A LOSER ON SO MANY LEVELS, SHIMA-KOU



RAWS: GECKO
TL/QC: LYENDITH
PR: TSUNTSUN
TS: TARAGE
PARTIAL REDRAW: FCKYEAHLAMIA
CL: DJIDANEZOKAWA

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...YOU AND SHIHO PREPARED ALL OF THIS, RIGHT...?
HMM, I DIDN'T DO A THING, ACTUALLY. KUROMINE-KUN PROPOSED THE IDEA,
CALLED EVERYONE, AND RESERVED AN EMPTY CLASSROOM.
NO, NO, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO PREPARED THE GAME OF LIFE
AND ACTUALLY PASSED THE MESSAGE.
...THANK YA SO MUCH, YOU TWO...
Y' KNOW?
THE PRESENT YA'VE GIVEN ME IS ENOUGH ALREADY...

...LONG AGO, MOM AND DAD
TOLD ME THAT I COULD INVITE MORE FRIENDS FOR MY BIRTHDAY.
SO I MADE A LOT OF INVITATION CARDS...
BUT IN THE END, I ONLY GAVE ONE TO SHIHO...
BUT MOM AND DAD STILL CELEBRATED IT WHOLE-HEARTEDLY REGARD-LESS.
AND I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL ABOUT THAT...
SO... SO YA SEE...? I'VE AL-READY...

GOT SOMETHING I'D LIKE MY PARENTS TO SEE...
I'VE RECEIVED...
THE MOST WONDERFUL OF BIRTHDAY PRESENTS TODAY...
ER...
HEY, ASAHI! DON'T MAKE HER CRY!!
WHO, ME?! IS IT REALLY MY FAULT?!
IT... IT'S FINE, SHIRA-GAMI-SAN. I CAN GET THAT YOU FEEL LONELY WITHOUT AIZAWA-SAN AROUND...
BUT YOU SEE! WE'RE ALL HERE!!
...I SEE.
THEN I'M GLAD.
...HOW ABOUT YOU ACKNOWL-EDGE IT ALREADY?

...DON'T BE SILLY.
THE MOMENT YOUKO'S SECRET IS EXPOSED, I'LL TAKE HER BACK HOME THEN AND THERE.
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I'M HERE.
...BUT STILL...
AS A PARENT...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO WATCH MY CHILD HAVING FUN WITH HER FRIENDS.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO IT.